

Island pride and love of homeland demonstrated on March 18



P.M. Eman gives the traditional address

Aruba may be a small island, but when it comes time to celebrate, particularly the National Day, March 18, they spare no effort in demonstrating their love of country. A full year of events marking Aruba's silver anniversary of autonomy within the Dutch Kingdom came to a close on Sunday March 18, with a final flourish.

This year, the traditional address by the Prime Minister and a parade took place in both Oranjestad and San Nicolas, so as to include all islanders in the final observance of this landmark year of Status Aparte, Aruba being independent of the other islands of the Netherlands An-

tilles, which officially began on January 1, 1986.

Island dignitaries gathered early on Sunday morning before the Bestuurskantoor, the Government House in Oranjestad where the offices of the various Ministers are located, to receive the annual "State of the Union" address from Prime Minister Mike Eman.

He likened the elders statesmen who initiated the Status Aparte movement over 60 years ago to a seaman, steering Aruba on a course; today's leaders are obligated to continue to steer the island true in the direction of pros-



Arrival of Governor Fredis Refunjol

perity, a united community and sustainability.

The morning ceremony was also marked by the un-



veiling of two commemorative books "Twenty-five

Years in Your Service," and "A Biography: 40 years to Today," which were ceremoniously gifted to Aruba's Governor Fredis Refunjol, Prime Minister Mike Eman, President of Parliament Paul Croes and Minister of Social & Economic Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar.

March 18, 1948 was the day that the Prime Minister's father, Albert (Shon) Eman presented the petition for an independent Aruba at round table discussion in Holland with their ministers and representatives of all the Dutch Caribbean territories;

in itself an historic first.

It was on March 18, 1976 that Aruba's national anthem and flag were first introduced. One of the committee members involved in the selection of the anthem, Maybelline Arends-Croes, directed the Tuti-Fruti Choral Group, consisting of children from four of Aruba's primary schools, in performing it on Sunday, accompanied by the National Youth Orchestra under the direction of Johnny Croes.

The morning finished with a parade of 47 organizations before the Prime Minister, local and visiting dignitaries, led by the fife and drum corps of the Aruba Militia.

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The largest group was Scouting Aruba, with over 225 participants, beginning with the youngest. The process was repeated in the evening in San Nicolas, with Minister of Finance, Communications, Utilities and Energy, Mike de Meza, addressing the people of his "home town" and performances by Sunrise Dancers and Rincon Boyz.

By Rosalie Klein